
RAILROAD-SHIPPER TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL
Washington D.C.

ANNUAL REPORT
December 2004

Pursuant to Section 726 of the Interstate Commerce Commission Termination Act (ICCTA), the chair of the Surface Transportation Board (STB) in mid-1996 announced the formation of the Railroad-Shipper Transportation Advisory Council ("RSTAC"). As required by section 726(f)(4) of ICCTA, RSTAC hereby submits this Annual Report for 2004.

I. Membership

The following are the current designated members of the 15-member Council by category:

Small Railroad (4): Bob Bailey, Port Jersey Railroad; Peter Gilbertson, Anacostia & Pacific; Charles Marshall, Genesee & Wyoming Inc.; Rick Webb, Watco Companies, Inc.

Small Shipper (5): Dean Atkinson, Bobcat Company; David Brotherton, Bowater, Inc.; Sharon Clark, Perdue Farms Incorporated; George Price, Berg Steel Pipe Corporation; Connie Thede, Muscatine Power & Water

Large Railroad (3): Stevan Bobb, Burlington Northern Santa Fe; Karen Borlaug Phillips, Canadian National/Illinois Central; Dean Piacente, CSX Transportation

Large Shipper (2): Robert Pugh, Georgia Pacific; Mike Scherm, BP Solvay Polyethylene North America

Public Member (1): James Brunkenhoefer, United Transportations Union

Ex officio members are The Honorable Roger Nober, Chairman of the Surface Transportation Board; The Honorable Douglas Buttrey, Vice Chairman of the Surface Transportation Board; The Honorable Francis Mulvey, Commissioner of the Surface Transportation Board; and The Honorable Norman Mineta, Secretary of Transportation, who is represented at Council meetings by William Gelston of the Federal Railroad Administration.

Current Council officers include Sharon Clark, Chair; Bob Bailey, Vice Chair; and Robert Pugh, Secretary. The Executive Committee is composed of the Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Past-Chair – Peter Gilbertson, Large Railroad Member – Stevan Bobb, and Public Interest Member – James Brunkenhoefer. Elections for new officers will be held at the January 2005 Council meeting.

The Council had a full complement of members in 2004 with the following changes in membership: Gary Spiegel of RailAmerica, Inc. resigned from the council in December 2003 and Rick Webb of Watco Companies, Inc filled this small railroad member vacancy. Jim Howarth of CSX Transportation resigned from the council in December 2003, and Frank Onimus of CSX Transportation filled this large railroad member vacancy. Frank Onimus subsequently resigned from the council in November 2004 and Dean Piacente of CSX Transportation filled his vacancy.

II. Council Meetings

The Council met four times in 2004.

- A. At its January 20, 2004 meeting, members discussed the lack of resilience in the nation's rail systems, decreasing railcar velocity and inconsistent trip times. Suggestions to make the rail industry more competitive included data transparency and car utilization improvements. The Council agreed to send a letter to the Association of American Railroads regarding data transparency concerns.
- B. At its April 14, 2004 meeting, members discussed feedback from the STB Conrail Oversight Meeting held April 2nd; STB Service Metrics and the current state of rail and motor capacity. The Council agreed to review STB 5-year metric information at the next meeting.
- C. At its July 14, 2004 meeting, Vice Chairman Douglas Buttrey and Commissioner Francis Mulvey were introduced to the Council. Members discussed recent UP and CSXT Service Forums and STB Service Metrics. Members suggested metrics could be made more robust by tracking annualized data, geographic metrics, and creating an on-time performance metric. Chairman Nober shared that three replies from Class I Carriers had been received on the Fall Peak Letter request from the STB.
- D. At its September 17, 2004 meeting, members discussed Data Transparency efforts. RSTAC mailed a letter of concerns to Class I CEO's in August and the AAR responded that this was an important issue with an offer to meet. Council members discussed the Fall Peak Railroad Service Forum held in Kansas City in September. A discussion regarding transportation capacity followed. The Council agreed to develop a balanced assessment of the issues including the frustrations of shippers and the realities of the carriers. The Council also agreed to consider recommendations regarding rail policy and the STB's role to create more effective oversight in a capacity-constrained environment.

III. Other Activities

--Sharon Clark, Charlie Marshall and Commissioner Mulvey met with representatives of the AAR to discuss the data transparency issue on November 18th. Members of the AAR and American Shortline Railroad Association (AASLRA) have been invited to the January 2005 RSTAC meeting to continue this discussion.

IV. Future Plans

- Pursue small shipper/railroad concerns regarding Data Transparency
- Develop a balanced assessment of the issues including the frustrations of shippers and the realities of carriers
- Consider recommendations regarding rail policy and the STB's role to create more effective oversight in a capacity-constrained environment

Additional RSTAC information is available at: http://www.stb.gov/rail_consumers/rail_shipper_council